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Parent-progeny sequencing indicates higher mutation rates in heterozygotes.

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Mutation rates vary within genomes, but the causes of this remain unclear¹. As many prior inferences rely on methods that assume an absence of selection, potentially leading to artifactual results², we call mutation events directly using a parent-offspring sequencing strategy focusing on *Arabidopsis* whilst using rice and honey bee for replication. Here we show that mutation rates are higher in heterozygotes and in proximity to crossover events. A correlation between recombination rate and intra-specific diversity is in part owing to a higher mutation rate in domains of high recombination/diversity. Implicating diversity *per se* as a cause, we find a [~3.5](#) fold higher mutation rate in heterozygotes than in homozygotes with mutation occurring in closer proximity to heterozygous sites than expected by chance. In a genome that is a patchwork of heterozygous and homozygous domains, mutations occur disproportionately more often in the heterozygous domains. If segregating mutations predispose to a higher local mutation rate, clusters of genes dominantly under purifying selection (more commonly homozygous) and under balancing selection (more commonly heterozygous), might have low and high mutation rates respectively. Results are consistent with this, there being a 10 times higher mutation rate in pathogen resistance genes, expected to be under positive/balancing selection. Consequently, we do not necessarily need to evoke extremely weak^{1,2} selection on the mutation rate to explain why mutational hot and cold spots might correspond to regions under positive/balancing and purifying selection respectively^{3,4}.

To determine mutation rates we selected two purebred parents in both *Arabidopsis* (strains Col and Ler) and rice (strains 9311 and PA64s) (Figure 1). We selfed each and sequenced [both parents \(P₀\) and](#) progeny (P₁). In addition, we crossed to generate intra-specific F₁ heterozygotes. A single heterozygous F₁ seed in each species was selfed to generate multiple F₂ progeny. Comparing sequences between F₂s we could determine the F₁->F₂ mutation rate. While direct sequencing of genomes is the best way to detect *de novo* mutations^{5,6}, the error rate is high. We negate this by having multiple lines of quality control (Extended data 1a). First, we sequenced multiple independent DNA extractions from the same individual or inbred progeny of the individual, permitting a mutation to be called only if replicates agree. In practice, a mutation called in one extract from a given plant was [always](#) found in replicates. In addition, we use a consensus approach, comparing each focal individual against all other relevant samples⁷. For example, a presumptive mutation in an F₂ must be both called within a “mutated” sample and not called in both the sequenced parental genomes and

all other F₂s. These criteria ensure that the mutation must have arisen sometime post a period late in the F₁, as all other F₂s share the same F₁ parent. To call a mutation we additionally require high sequence quality (score \geq 30; detail in Supplementary Table 1) and high coverage (>6000 \times for the sample cohorts and >40 \times for each sample) with at least 5 or more reads which must include both the forward and reverse reads. This approach is robust against sequencing or alignment errors in the reference genome⁷. False positive rates are negligible, while false negative rates are low (Methods).

In *Arabidopsis*, 237 base mutations and 67 small indels were detected in the 26 progeny of selfing *Arabidopsis* parents (P₀ to P₁) and 67 F₂ plants (F₁ to F₂) from the Col \times Ler cross (Figure 1, Table 1 and Supplementary Table 2 & 3). To assess their reliability, several strategies were applied. First, Sanger sequencing confirmed 100% of 112 sampled base mutations and of 43 sampled indels present in F₂s. Confirmation requires that the mutation be present in the focal individual and absent in both parental genomes. Second, the sequenced 32 F₄ plants, derived from two F₂s (c52 and c64 with 10 mutations observed) (Fig. 1 and Supplementary Table 3), confirmed 100% of these F₂ mutations at a frequency of \sim 73% (slightly higher than the expected 62.5%). Third, we randomly sampled 4-8 F₃ plants from each of 21 sampled F₂s and subjected these F₃s to Sanger sequencing. This confirmed 99 out of 100 sampled base mutations and 24 out of 26 indels present in F₃s.

Comparison with prior estimates suggests that our method is robust. We estimate a rate of 7.4×10^{-9} base mutations per generation per site in homozygous individuals (i.e. P₀ \rightarrow P₁), similar to the prior estimate of 7.0×10^{-9} from mutation-accumulation Col lines⁸. As typically reported we observe more transitions than transversions (Supplementary Table 4, Extended data [2a](#)) and for mutation to be disproportionately common at GC-rich nucleotide triplets (Supplementary Table 5). The ratio of point mutations to indels (3.9) is in line with prior estimates (3.11-5.8)^{8,9}. Mutations in Col \times Ler F₁ hybrids are as likely to occur on the Ler genome as on the Col genome ($\chi^2 = 1.4$, d.f. = 1, $P = 0.23$).

We note one deviation from null expectation, this being a higher density of mutations in

Arabidopsis non-coding compared with coding regions, that cannot be accounted for in terms of differences in trinucleotide content (Supplementary Table 6). This suggests either underestimation of the mutation rate in coding sequences, possibly due to purifying selection, or a lower mutation rate in transcribed sequence, possibly owing to transcription coupled repair. A selectionist explanation predicts an increased relative frequency of indels that are multiples of three long in coding sequence. Even employing a one tailed test, we find no evidence for this. Of 81 indels, 62 and 12 are not multiples of three and outside and inside coding sequence respectively, while 5, outside and 2, inside, are multiples of three (Fisher's exact test, one tailed $P=0.35$).

Population-wide intragenomic diversity is commonly reported to be higher in genomic domains of high crossing-over¹⁰, which we also see in *Arabidopsis* (Extended data 3a). This is typically ascribed to reduced selective interference between physically close alleles in domains of high recombination¹⁰. However it might also reflect a tendency for regions with high recombination rates to also be domains with high mutation rates, possibly because recombination is mutagenic^{11–16}. Dissecting the chromosomes into 1 Mb non-overlapping regions we indeed find a positive correlation between mutation rates and the rates of crossover events in the 67 *Arabidopsis* F₂s and 32 F₄ plants (Fig. 2a). This is consistent with the possibility [either](#) that recombination is mutagenic or that both mutation and recombination preferentially occur in high diversity domains.

Given the very high intragenomic variation in crossover rates seen in honey bees, we examined the possibility that mutation happens more commonly in the vicinity of crossovers by examining *de novo* mutations in 46 honey bee genomes. In this species too intraspecific diversity is correlated with the crossing over rate¹⁷. Mutagenic effects of crossing over are thought to occur within 2kb of the break point¹⁶. Of 35 mutations, 2 mutations occurred within 2kb distance to a crossover breakpoint¹⁷ ($P=0.0012$ with 10,000 randomizations; Extended data 2b). Thus in this genome too, new mutations occur in proximity to crossover events more often than expected by chance. We estimate the per genome mutation rate of a diploid queen to be 9.0×10^{-9} (6.8×10^{-9} for base substitution and 2.2×10^{-9} for indels).

While in the immediate vicinity of a double strand break (DSB) mutagenic repair may be acting¹¹⁻¹⁶, a higher rate of both recombination and mutation (mechanistically uncoupled) in domains of high diversity provides an alternative explanation for the correlation between mutation and recombination. That intraspecific diversity in *Arabidopsis* correlates with between-species divergence (Extended data [3b](#)) is consistent with either possibility. A possible coupling between mutation and intragenomic diversity (i.e. heterozygosity) could be found if heterozygosity causes an increase in the mutation rate¹⁸. We test this by comparing progeny derived from heterozygous and homozygous parents in our two plant species. The point mutation rate (2.68×10^{-8}) as assayed from analysis of the F₂ progeny of heterozygous F₁ *Arabidopsis* is ~3.6-fold higher than that in the homozygous progeny of the selfed parents (two-tailed Brunner-Munzel (BM) test, $P=3.64 \times 10^{-8}$). Similarly, the indel mutation rate in intergenic regions in heterozygote F₂s is ~2.8-fold higher than that in homozygotes (Table 1; two-tailed BM test, $P=0.0012$). The same pattern is seen in rice lines with 3.4-fold higher mutation rates in heterozygotes (3.2×10^{-9} and 1.1×10^{-8} per site per meiosis in homozygotes and heterozygotes respectively; Table 2; two-tailed BM test, $P=0.0028$). Analysis of 158 *Arabidopsis* point mutations in which Col, Ler and *A. lyrata* have the same state prior to mutation (and thus unlikely to hypermutagenic), [reports](#) that Col-Ler F₁ has a 5.02 fold larger mutation rate than the selfed Col or Ler parents ($P_0 \rightarrow P_1$) (BM test, $P=1.02 \times 10^{-7}$).

The possibility that the degree of heterozygosity predicts the mutation rate can be further tested. Compared with F₂, a reduced mutation rate is expected in F₃ or F₄ selfed plants because the heterozygous regions will reduce by one half each generation. We identified 86 mutations detected in only one of the 32 F₄s, comprising 73 base and 13 indel mutations, giving a base mutation rate of 1.34×10^{-8} in F₄s, inherited from 18 F₃s of 2 F₂s (c52 and c64 in Fig. 1), and 1.60×10^{-8} in F₃s (for method see Ref. ⁸; Fig. 2b and Extended data [1b](#) for details). This ordering is as expected under the assumption that heterozygosity predicts mutation rates.

Were mutations easier to call in heterozygous regions the above may be artifactual. To

address this we considered mutations from the F₁ to the F₂. In some genomic domains the F₂ preserves the heterozygosity of the F₁ (which is uniformly heterozygous during meiosis) while in some genomic locations the F₂ is homozygous. If artifact were to explain higher call rates in the heterozygous regions we expect more mutants called in the F₂ heterozygous domains. We do not observe this (153 mutations in the 54% heterozygous domains, 120 in homozygous domains, expected 146.5 and 126.5, respectively allowing for trinucleotide content; χ^2 with Yates correction = 0.53, d.f. = 1, $P=0.47$).

The above results may reflect either a) a tendency for heterozygotes to have genome-wide disruption of the mechanisms that prevent mutation (e.g. owing to disruption of coadapted heteromers), this being dependent on the proportion of the genome that is heterozygous or b) a genomically local effect of heterozygosity on the mutation rate. If the latter is the case, in genomes that are stratified into heterozygous and homozygous blocks the mutation rate should be higher in heterozygous domains. [We observe this](#). There are 69 mutations in the regions of F₄s derived from heterozygous regions of both c64 (48% heterozygous blocks) and c52 (61% heterozygous blocks), compared with 27 in the regions of F₄s from homozygous regions of F₂s. Allowing both for the proportion of the genome covered and for differences in trinucleotide content, there is an excess in domains of heterozygosity (Expected 52.3 and 43.7; χ^2 with Yates correction = 11.02, d.f.=1, $P<0.001$; Fig. 2c). Analysis of non-hypermutable sites confirms the same (χ^2 with Yates correction = 6.11, d.f. = 1, $P=0.01$).

A more conservative version of this test examines the 96 mutations in the F₄, accumulated since the F₂, in the 7% of the genome remaining heterozygous in the F₄. While such regions have a longer history of heterozygosity, many of the domains homozygous in the F₄ were heterozygous in the F₃. Nonetheless, we observe more mutations than expected in the heterozygous spans (heterozygous span: observe 13, expected 6.85; homozygous span 83 expected 89.15; χ^2 with Yates correction = 5.02, d.f. = 1, $P=0.02$). Analysis of non-hypermutable sites confirms this (χ^2 with Yates correction = 4.13, d.f. = 1, $P=0.04$). The above data support the [notion](#) that heterozygosity [disposes to locally](#)

[increased mutation rate.](#)

If heterozygosity is causative we might expect mutational events to be close to heterozygous sites in the parents, while sites polymorphic in the population but not in the parents, need not be in especially close proximity to mutations. We find that parental heterozygous sites are significantly closer to mutational sites than expected (the red dots in Fig. 2d). There are a total of 273 mutations raised from $F_1 \rightarrow F_2$. The median distance of the *de novo* mutation to a heterozygous site is 167 bp (0 to 32694 bp), significantly smaller than the expected median distance with a random null (10,000 randomizations, Expected median = 207 bp; $P = 0.05$). Of those mutations 113 are within 100bp of heterozygous sites, significantly more than expected by chance (10,000 randomizations, Expected number = 93, $P = 0.005$). As also expected, the level of diversity within the parents surrounding mutation sites is higher than the genome average (0.39% between two parents). By contrast, population polymorphism shows no such trend (Fig. 2d; Extended data [3c](#)). The different patterns are consistent with local heterozygosity in the parent being causative, but a bias towards heterozygosity and mutation to both be intergenic might provide an alternative rationale.

On a broader scale, if we bin the genome into windows of 1Mb, we find a correlation between mutation rate and intra-specific diversity (Spearman's $\rho = 0.76$, $P = 0.0059$), suggestive of broad scale mutational domains that impact on levels of polymorphism. If heterozygosity causes mutation such domains might be self-reinforcing, but the correlation alone is not evidence for this. Such an autocatalytic process suggests that both the highly polymorphic regions within a species and the species with higher rates of outcrossing could have higher mutation rates, compared with the conserved regions or self-crossing species, respectively. A number of studies indicate that the mating system (outcrossing or selfing), affects the mutation rate¹⁹ and that mutations occur near pre-existing diversity²⁰, particularly near insertions/deletions²¹. However, as selfers and asexuals can retain linkage disequilibrium between mutator alleles and mutations, genome-wide selection on the mutation rate could confound between-species comparisons. More generally,

understanding between-species variation is likely to be difficult owing to expected covariation with hard to know parameters, such as the effective population size.

It has been observed^{3,4} that genomic hot and cold spots of indirectly inferred mutations accord with domains of genes putatively under strong purifying selection (mutational cold spots) and positive or balancing selection (mutational hot spots). The observation might, however, be an artifact of indirect methods to detect mutations: putatively neutral mutations in genes under strong purifying selection might be purged by selection if not neutral, causing an underestimation of mutation rates². Our sequencing strategy largely avoids this problem. Nonetheless, we find evidence that genes expected to be under positive/balancing selection have high mutation rates. In total in *Arabidopsis*, 68 base mutations and 14 small indels occurred in coding sequences either as synonymous (21), non-synonymous or frame-shift mutations (59; Supplementary Table 6). Remarkably, 12 mutations are found in just a very few highly diversified gene families and hence prime targets of positive/balancing selection (Supplementary Table 7). Particular hotspots include 9 *LRR*-encoding (associated with pathogen resistance), and 3 *F-box* genes, where observed numbers greatly exceed the expected 0.89 (~10-fold higher) and 0.68 (~4.4-fold higher) mutations per family in these *Arabidopsis* *F*₂s respectively (Supplementary Table 7). Of the 17 coding mutations previously reported⁸, one *NBS-LRR* gene (AT1G59780) and one *LRR*-pkinase were detected (Supplementary Table 7), suggesting that this result is repeatable. *LRR*-encoding and *F-box* genes have a lower GC content than the average (42.6%, 42.1% respectively versus mean of 44%), suggesting this is not owing to underlying nucleotide mutability.

While at first sight a higher mutation rate in genes associated with pathogen resistance (and positive/balancing selection more generally) makes sense in terms of selection acting on the mutation rate^{3,18,22,23}, such modifiers of the mutation rate acting locally will have such weak selection on them that such an explanation makes little theoretical sense^{1,2}, especially when population sizes are small. Our results suggest a resolution of this paradox: genes subject to balancing selection will have a higher chance of being heterozygous thus increasing the local mutation rate. That is to say, the selected variants could themselves be the modifiers

of the mutation rate and hence their increase in frequency is attributed not to weak selection on the mutation rate, but strong selection on the direct phenotypic effects of some of the mutations.

We do not presume that heterozygosity is the only possible coupling between mutation and “non-essentiality”. Indeed, an explanation based on heterozygosity is not of obvious relevance to bacteria. The effect we observed suggesting correlation between DSB events and mutation might, however, be more general. Indeed, in bacteria DSB events can be mutagenic²⁴ and one need only hypothesise a coincidence between such recombination and non-essentiality, as seen in several eukaryotes²⁵, to provide an alternative explanation for hot and cold mutational spots. More immediate effects of transcription-coupled repair/mutation might also be of relevance.

While we make no attempt to investigate the underlying mechanism, we can speculate as to how heterozygosity might promote mutation. Several suggestions have been given¹⁸, to which we add a possible coupling with poor-pairing during meiosis, as an immediate consequence of heterozygosity, especially for indels, may be poor-pairing quality or failure of homology search. Poor pairing might be mutagenic because physically exposed regions are more likely to proceed to Spo11 mediated DSB^{26,27}, repair of which is thought error-prone²⁸. Similarly, the DNA damage response (DDR) protein MDC1 promotes accumulation of the sensor kinase ATR on unsynapsed chromosomes and chromatin loops in mammals²⁹. Extended data [2c](#) illustrates such a possible mechanism, where there are great differences in both length (47 versus 48 kb) and diversity (~10% between AT3G23110 and AT3G23120) between Col and Ler (or homologous chromosomes in the F₁).

If we have a major caveat about our results, it would be that the extent of size difference between Col and Ler is such that it may be unrepresentative of what normally happens in meiosis. Nonetheless, the poor-pairing model has the advantage that it might also explain the domains of higher mutation rate in homozygous Col⁸. During meiosis in homozygotes, repeating sequences (including clusters of homologous genes) can find homologous

sequences at non-orthologous sites (ectopic recombination) and so force un-paired regions between homologous chromosomes. We analyzed the repeat sequences in and around our 145 and the previously found^{8,9} 42 mutation bearing genes in homozygotes. Consistent with expectations 84.8% and 85.7% of these genes, including the gene AT1G59780, are located in repeat sequences or homologous gene clusters (Supplementary Table 7).

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Author Information All Illumina reads have been submitted to the short reads archive (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra>) under accession number PRJNA243018, PRJNA252997, PRJNA178613 and PRJNA232554. Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to D.T. (dtian@nju.edu.cn) or L.D.H. (bssldh@bath.ac.uk)

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Table 1. Number of spontaneous mutations per meiosis in the *Arabidopsis* genome.

Genotypes of the plants with meiosis	Sequenced samples		Base mutations (average mutations/sample)			Indel mutations (average mutations/sample)		
			Non-repe at regions	Repeat regions	Total (Average)	Non-repeat regions	Repeat regions	Total (Average)
Homozygotes (P ₀ →P ₁)	26 P ₁ s		18 (0.69)	5 (0.19)	23 (0.88)	6 (0.29)	2 (0.08)	8 (0.31)
Heterozygotes (F ₁ →F ₂)	67 F ₂ s		164 (2.45)	50 (0.75)	214 (3.19)	49 (0.673)	10 (0.15)	59 (0.88)
Heterozygotes (F ₂ →F ₄)	32 F ₄ s	Specific	52 (1.62)	21 (0.66)	73 (2.28)	11 (0.34)	2 (0.06)	13 (0.41)
		Shared	4	5	9	1 (0.03)	0	1 (0.03)
	Average mutations/sample of F ₂ →F ₃				(1.92)	ND		
	Average mutations/sample of F ₃ →F ₄				(1.61)	ND		

The indel sizes range from 1 to 27 bp (2.91 on average; see Supplementary Table 8). The calculation of average mutations in the meiosis from F₂→F₃ and F₃→F₄ is described in Extended data [1b](#). ND, not determined because the number of indels is too small to calculate the average indel mutations per sample of F₂→F₃ or F₃→F₄.

Table 2. Numbers of spontaneous mutations (new SNPs) per meiosis in rice F₂s. Two rice samples, PA64s-3 and F2_29, were removed due to their low sequencing quality in one of the independent sequencings. The base substitution mutation rate is 3.2×10^{-9} and 1.1×10^{-8} per site per meiosis in homozygous and heterozygous rice genome, respectively.

Samples		SNPs	Indels	Samples	SNPs	Indels
Homozygotes	9311-1	0	1	PA64s-1	1	0
	9311-2	1	1	PA64s-2	1	2
	9311-3	3	0	Average	1.2	0.8
Heterozygotes (F₂s)	F2_22	5	2	F2_32	3	1
	F2_23	3	0	F2_56	1	1
	F2_24	4	2	F2_88	6	2
	F2_25	11	1	F2_89	6	0
	F2_27	2	1	F2_90	1	0
	F2_30	3	0	Average	4.09	0.91

Figure 1. Pedigree relationship of the sequenced *Arabidopsis* samples. The number of circles with solid line denotes how many samples from each generation are sequenced, e.g., the sequenced samples from c52 are equal to $2 \times 1 + 10 \times 2 = 22$.

Figure 2. Patterns of diversity, recombination and *de novo* mutation. **a.** Relationship between the mutation and recombination rate. When the chromosomes are dissected into 1 Mb non-overlapping regions, recombination rate (cM/Mb) and mutation number per Mb can be obtained for each of them. When ranked then sorted by the recombination rates, the mean mutation rate per recombinational class was obtained. Line is standard regression (for relationship between recombination and diversity see Extended data [3a](#)); **b** & **c.** variation in the mutation rates as a function of heterozygosity proportion during meiosis. Detailed calculation of mutation rates of F_3 to F_4 , F_2 to F_3 is shown in Extended data [1b](#). The number of mutations was counted separately in the regions of F_4 s derived from heterozygous or homozygous regions of F_2 s, respectively. In 2c the numbers in brackets reflect the proportion of the genome that is hetero- or homo-zygous; **d.** Relationship between nucleotide diversity and the distance to the *de novo* mutations. Window 0 in x-axis is the 2×100 bp sequence surrounding the position of any given *de novo* mutation and 1-9 is 100-900 bp away from the mutation on both sides. For each window of 2×100 bp sequence, the average diversity is calculated. The red dots denote the diversity between Col and Ler, i.e. heterozygosity of parents, the green dots are the average diversity among 80 *Arabidopsis* populations at the same windows⁴⁰, and the blue dashes are the average genomic diversity (0.39%) between the two parental genomes (Col and Ler). Error bars, mean \pm s.e.m. [Test for difference in slope, \$Z=3.08\$, \$P=0.002\$.](#)

Methods

Materials and sequencing

We selected two purebred parents in both *Arabidopsis* (strains Col and Ler) and rice (strains 9311 and PA64s) to cross to generate intra-specific F₁ heterozygotes. Col and Ler were female and male parent, respectively. In rice maternal PA64s and paternal 93-11 were crossed to generate their F₁, the super hybrid rice *LYP9*³⁰. A single heterozygous F₁ seed in each species was used to generate F₂ progeny. In *Arabidopsis* two F₂s (lines c52 and c64) were used to generate F₃ and F₄ plants by self-crossing. A total of 67 *Arabidopsis* and 12 rice F₂s and 32 *Arabidopsis* F₄s were randomly selected for sequencing (Fig. 1 and Extended data 1a). In addition the self-crossed homozygous progeny from each pure parent (P₀->P₁) were sequenced (17 Col, 9 Ler, 3 9311 and 3 PA64s). Finally, one each of the four parents and 1 F₁ (in rice) were also sequenced, making a total of 148 plants. Of these, the F₂ and F₄ plants experienced one and three meiosis since F₁, respectively (Fig. 1 and Supplementary Table 1). Col and Ler seeds were gifts from Joy Bergelson at University of Chicago. *Oryza sativa* cultivars PA64s and 93-11 were obtained from Dr. Cailin Wang at the Institute of Food Crops, Jiangsu Academy of Agricultural Sciences, China.

Two DNA samples were extracted separately from two leaves using the CTAB method and sequenced independently for each of *Arabidopsis* parents, their 33 F₂s and all rice plants at BGI-Shenzhen. One DNA sample for the other 34 *Arabidopsis* plants was sequenced. For all, paired-end sequencing libraries with insert size of 500 bp were constructed for each DNA sample according to the manufacturer's instructions. Then, 2×100 bp paired-end reads were generated on Illumina HiSeq 2000.

For the analysis in honey bees (*Apis mellifera ligustica* Spin) three queens and 43 drones were collected from 3 colonies in a bee farm (details described in Liu et al.¹⁷).

Reads mapping and identification of candidate mutations

The Col genome (TAIR10) was downloaded from TAIR Web site (ftp://ftp.Arabidopsis.org/home/tair/Sequences/whole_chromosomes). The assembly Ler scaffolds, SNPs and indels were downloaded from 1001 Genomes

(<http://1001genomes.org/projects/assemblies.html>). The repeat and non-repeat sequences in the genome were grouped by both annotated transposable elements, RepeatMasker regions for *Arabidopsis* (www.repeatmasker.org) and homologous fragments (identity >70%; alignment length >200 bp). Raw reads were cleaned by trimming adapter sequences and removing reads which contain more than 50% low quality bases (quality value ≤ 5). All cleaned reads were mapped to TAIR10 reference genome after trimming and removing low-quality bases by using BWA-MEM (version 0.7.10) algorithm, which shows better performance than several other read aligners to date while mapping 100bp sequences³¹. Then the mapping results were processed using Picard MarkDuplicates to remove over-sequenced DNA molecules. Mapping artifacts introduced while aligning reads on the edges of indels were removed using the GATK package^{32,33}.

After that, the HaplotypeCaller in GATK package, which incorporates local re-assembly of haplotypes, was employed to call SNPs and indels. This heavily tested protocol, used in 1000 Genomes Project, was chosen as it provides the best reduction in false positives³⁴. We joint-genotyped the relevant cohort with all *Arabidopsis* or rice samples and filtered out those sample-specific loci as the initial candidate sets. In these sets, the regions without reads in the parent samples or >8 other samples were excluded.

To ensure the accuracy of calling the *de novo* mutations, numerous stringent strategies were employed (Extended data 1a): (i) in each sample, the candidate “mutation” cannot be called in other non-descendent samples; (ii) the candidate mutation must be called in at least 5 reads and must include both the forward and reverse reads with high variant quality score (≥ 30 for indel and ≥ 50 for SNP); (iii) owing to alignment difficulties in the vicinity of indels, those base mutations located around indels (<10 bp each side) between the two parental genomes were removed; (iv) the called indels which have an ≤ 20 bp interval between them were discarded. All alignments were manually inspected in Integrative Genomics Viewer (IGV)³⁵. For size distribution of indels see Supplementary Table 8.

Estimation of the possible false positives

The initial filtering may retain a number of false positives due to sequencing, mapping or genotyping errors. We employ a strategy that minimizes the false positive rate, but by

necessity likely generates a higher false negative rate. While most of the errors are position-dependent, the mapping errors are less likely to show up in only a single individual in multi-independent samples³⁶. Therefore, for any given focal mutation in a focal individual, we examined the reads from the same location in all other members of the cohort and removed those “mutations” where some reads carry the mutation allele in non-focal individuals (excepting descendents). This method becomes especially efficient with increasing sample size. For example with our >100 samples in *Arabidopsis* derived from a single source, all individuals should share the same error rate at the same position. Hence a mutation called in one and only one F₂ is likely to be real. This method is similar to the consensus approach⁷, which is ideal with a large number of samples and is robust against sequencing or alignment errors presenting a very low false-positive rate⁷.

In addition, we extracted all reads containing candidate mutation loci, and aligned them to the reference sequence in this region using Clustalw 2.0³⁷. All alignments of each mutation-associated region were manually inspected by Integrative Genomics Viewer (IGV)³⁵ to minimize the risk of alignment artifacts and mapping errors. If a region has no companion in the reference genome it is ignored, possibly causing false negatives.

Further, in theory, all of these mutations detected in P₁ and F₂ samples should be heterozygous (the probability that the same mutation occurs in the same position of the genome in two independent meioses is negligible). As expected, only 17 (5.6%) out of the 304 mutations were reported as “homozygous”. The residual homozygosity might be caused by biased library construction. In fact, as expected, most (15) of them have a total depth less than or around half of the sequencing depth. These mutations were all verified by PCR as present in the F₂ but absent in the parent (P₀).

Fourth, a true mutation must be heritable and segregating in its progeny but any sequencing error should be not. As expected we detected about half of the mutations called in F₂ generation in their offspring (21 F₃s were randomly sampled from 41 F₂s with seeds and 32 F₄s in Fig. 1). In addition we exclude the possibility of these mutations being present in their parents by PCR amplification and Sanger sequencing.

Finally, the errors could come from a time prior to the sequencing due to somatic mutation, library construction or DNA amplification at an earlier stage. These cases can be

estimated by independent DNA extraction and sequencing for the same sample. The 51 plant individuals, each of which has been sequenced twice using DNA samples extracted separately from two leaves, provides an opportunity to test the false positives caused prior to sequencing. Based on those sequences, we found that all of mutations detected are present in both of the independent sequencing libraries.

Estimation of possible false negatives

While the NGS mapping-based method has good accuracy and a low false positive rate in detecting candidate mutations when applied with stringent filtering^{6,8,9}, the false negative rate remains difficult to estimate accurately, but given our stringency is likely to be considerably higher than our false positive rate. Some false negatives also appear because of technology limitations. For example, that we observe ~5.8% of F₂ mutations as being “homozygous”, suggests that we could be missing mutations because they are appearing in the unsequenced component.

We took several approaches to attempt to estimate the false negative rate. In the first we applied the method of simulating mutations described by Keightley et al.³⁸. In brief, 1,000 synthetic mutations were simulated by modifying sequencing reads for randomly selected sites in 20 *Arabidopsis* F₂s. Then, we realigned and analyzed the modified data using the same procedures as for the real data. Among these 1,000 synthetic mutations, 897 were considered as callable sites according to the criteria of Keightley et al.. Finally, 880 out of the 897 sites (~98.1%) were directly identified as mutations using our pipeline, suggesting a low frequency of false negatives amongst callable sites (1.9%). This does not however address the problem of mutations missing when the sequence is missing. Indeed, 12% of sites (120 of 1000) are missing.

A more direct way to estimate the false negative rate is to search for mutations found in more than one F₄ progeny, with these F₄s being derived from different F₃s but the same F₂. Such shared mutations most likely were in the F₂ but missed. We can then ask how many we missed in the F₂. In total, we identified 11 shared mutations of which 10 were correctly detected in F₂ ancestors. PCR and Sanger sequencing confirms that the newly identified mutation is really present, but not originally called, in the F₂. This suggests a 9.1%

$(1/(10+1)=0.091)$ lower estimation of mutation rate due to false negatives.

The relationship between the divergence (*A. thaliana* vs. *A. lyrata*) and the average diversity of 80 *A. thaliana* ecotypes.

The whole-genome alignments between *A. lyrata* and *A. thaliana* -Col were downloaded from VISTA database³⁹. Only alignments over 5000 bp were taken for further analysis. Non-unique alignments were discarded. First, the potential substitutions between *A. lyrata* and *A. thaliana* -Col were called. To this end, if the site of substitution was detected as a polymorphic site in the 80 *A. thaliana* ecotypes⁴⁰, it was removed (masked) prior to estimating the divergence between *A. thaliana* vs. *A. lyrata*. Thus only the remaining substitutions, which we presume to be fixed within the population of *A. thaliana*, were used to calculate the divergence between *A. thaliana* vs. *A. lyrata*. This was done to remove circularity in the divergence-diversity analysis. Only the single base changes at intergenic, intron and fourfold degenerate sites were used to estimate the divergence and diversity.

The intraspecific diversity in any pairwise between-strain comparison was defined as the proportion of relevant sites that are polymorphic per window (i.e. polymorphism density). The average diversity in the above regions among the 80 *A. thaliana* ecotypes was calculated in their corresponding regions of the alignments between *A. lyrata* and *A. thaliana* -Col. The between-ecotype diversity was then defined as the mean pairwise diversity comparing each of the 80 *A. thaliana* ecotypes to each other. The divergence between *A. thaliana* and *A. lyrata* was estimated using baseml with TN93 substitution model implemented in PAML⁴¹.

Calculation of the mutation rate in the meiosis of F₂ to F₃ (EM3) and F₃ to F₄ (EM4).

In this study, 18 F₃s originated from 2 F₂s (c52 and c64) were selfed to produce 34 different F₄s. We define EM3 as the expectation of specific mutations in each F₃ and EM4 as the expectation of specific mutations in each F₄. The mutations shared in F₄s are deduced to be the meiosis mutations of F₂ to F₃ (Extended data [1b](#)). However, some of the meiosis mutations of F₂ to F₃ have been lost due to the random drift or have been classified as F₄

specific mutations due to absence in other F₄s. Therefore, there may be an overestimate for these F₄ specific mutations generated in the meiosis of F₃ to F₄, and there may be an underestimate for these shared mutations in these F₄s which have been generated in the meiosis of F₂ to F₃.

Specifically, one quarter of the mutations present in the germ line before the specialization of the reproductive tissues are expected to be homozygous at the beginning of the next generation. Let μ be the estimate of new homozygous mutations per generation, and τ , the estimate of new heterozygous mutations per generation⁸:

$$\mu_3: \mu \text{ From } F_2 \text{ to } F_3$$

$$\mu_4: \mu \text{ From } F_3 \text{ to } F_4$$

$$\tau_3: \tau \text{ From } F_2 \text{ to } F_3$$

$$\tau_4: \tau \text{ From } F_3 \text{ to } F_4$$

For one generation, the estimate of mutations = $N\mu + N\tau$, N is the number of organisms in this generation.

For two generations, the estimate of mutations = $N_1 \mu_1 + N_1 P \tau_1 + N_2 \mu_2 + N_2 \tau_2$. Here P is the probability that the heterozygous mutation in the first generation is inherited by its progenies, which depend on the number of its progeny.

In our study, as we have 6 F₃ with 1 progeny, 10 F₃ with the formula can be changed to:

$$\text{All mutations observed in } F_4 = 18\mu_3 + (6P_1 + 10P_2 + 2P_3)\tau_3 + 32\mu_4 + 32\tau_4$$

P_n is the likelihood that a mutation in a F₃ with n progenies is inherited.

For a heterozygous mutation in F₃ with n progeny, the probability that no progeny genotype is homozygous mutation (a/a) is 0.75^n , and at least one of the progeny carry homozygous mutation is $1 - 0.75^n$.

For all the homozygous mutations in F₄:

$$\begin{aligned} 18\mu_3 + 32\mu_4 + [6 \times (1 - 0.75) + 10 \times (1 - 0.75^2) + 2 \times (1 - 0.75^3)]\tau_3 \\ = 19 + 3 \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

For a heterozygous mutation in F₃, the probability that it is not inherited by the progenies is 0.25^n and the probability that the mutation appears as heterozygous in F₃s is $0.75^n - 0.25^n$. For F₃ with 1, 2 or 3 progenies, the likelihood is 0.5, 0.5 and 0.40625.

For all the heterozygous mutations in F₄:

$$(6 \times 0.5 + 10 \times 0.5 + 2 \times 0.40625)\tau_3 + 32\tau_4 = 54 + 6 \quad (2)$$

The shared mutations in F₄ can be counted as the result of mutations in F₃.

As shown (Extended data [1b](#)) for the shared heterozygous mutations in F₄:

$$[10 \times 0.25 + 2 \times (0.5^3 + 3 \times 0.5^2 \times 0.25)]\tau_3 = 6 \quad (3)$$

$$\tau_3 = 1.92$$

According to equation (2) and (3):

$$\tau_4 = 1.346$$

According to equation (1) and (3):

$$18\mu_3 + 32\mu_4 = 8.5 \quad (4)$$

$$\mu_3 + 1.78\mu_4 = 0.472$$

$$\mu_3 \leq 0.472$$

$$\mu_4 \leq 0.266$$

If a homozygous mutation occurred in 10 F₃s with 2 progenies or 2 F₃s with 3 progenies (counted as μ_3), all of its progeny will carry homozygous mutations, which was not found in our result, so μ_3 was assumed to be 0.

$$\mu_3 = 0$$

$$\mu_4 = 0.266$$

$$EM3 = \mu_3 + \tau_3 = 1.92$$

$$EM4 = \mu_4 + \tau_4 = 1.612$$

Therefore, the mutation rates of F₂ to F₃ or F₃ to F₄ should be 1.60×10^{-8} or 1.34×10^{-8} , respectively.

Distribution of mutations and statistical analyses

To determine the distribution of mutations on chromosomes (Extended data [3d](#)), the *de novo* mutations were used from our sequenced 26 P₁s, 67 F₂s, 32 F₄s, and two published data sets^{8,9}, all of which employed the ecotypes of Col, Ler or the offspring of Col×Ler. The recombination (crossover) data was collected from our 67 F₂s and 32 F₄s (Supplementary Table 9).

To know whether proximity to heterozygous sites could affect the mutation rate, we calculated the distance of the new mutations to heterozygous sites. To detect whether the observed mutations tend to arise on derived versus ancestral alleles, we make use of the alignments, described above, between *A. thaliana* (Col) and *A. lyrata*. If the same aligned nucleotide is seen in both *A. lyrata* and *A. thaliana* (prior to mutation) it was presumed to reflect the ancestral state. A total of 201 mutations (158 SNPs and 43 indels) have a clear ancestral state. Of the remaining 199, 93 have no alignments, 59 are in the gaps of *A. lyrata*, 15 are ambiguous due to non-unique alignments, and 32 have a different nucleotide compared to *A. thaliana* thus preventing ancestral state determination.

To estimate the expected number of mutations in heterozygous and homozygous compartments under a null expectation that heterozygosity per se is not a relevant parameter, we factor in both the absolute size of both compartments and, for point mutations, the trinucleotide content. The GC content of sequence flanking indels (35%) is almost identical to that of the genomic average (36%) so we make no nucleotide content correction for these. Given a total observed set of mutations, we calculate a mutation rate per given trinucleotide triplet, with the mutation centered with the triplet. We then for each compartment calculate the total number of each triplet to generate an expected number of point mutations per triplet. We then sum across all triplets to derive an expected total number of mutations in a given compartment. As an internal consistency check we calculate the sum across the two compartments, ensuring that this is the same as the observed total number of mutations. We thus have both observed and expected (allowing for nucleotide content and span length) number of mutations. For indels we just consider the proportion of all sequence in each compartment. We test for difference by chi squared test with Yate's correction.

Statistics were performed in R⁴². Brunner-Munzel (BM) test was implemented in lawstat package. When *P* values were derived from randomization, 10,000 randomizations were employed in which the data was randomly ascribed by shuffling of class (e.g. heterozygous or homozygous). The unbiased estimation of empirical *P*, meaning expected type I error rate, is $n+1/m+1$ where *n* is the number of observations as or more extreme than that observed in the real test reporting statistic and *m* is the number of randomization⁴³.

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Extended data 1. Details of Materials and Methods. **a.** Schematic diagram of the detection of de novo mutations. **b.** The calculation of the expected mutations in the meiosis of F2 to F3 (EM3) and F3 to F4 (EM4). For further explanation see Methods.

Extended data 2. Mutational properties. **a.** Spectra of nucleotide substitutions in *Arabidopsis* and rice. **b.** Co-occurrence of mutations and crossover break points in bee. By using the sequence data of 43 honey bee drones and their 3 corresponding queens¹⁷, a total of 27 base and 8 indel mutations were detected. Noteworthy, 2 of 35 mutations are found in close proximity with crossover break points in the same sample (Distance<2 Kb; P=0.0012 with 10,000 randomizations), these ones being illustrated here. The crossover event is between the red and blue line with marker positions annotated. The positions of the mutations are annotated with arrows. **c.** The schematic diagram of the genomic structures and the possible pairings of two homologous chromosomes during the meiosis at two mutated *LRR-TM* genes (top panel) and one mutated *NBS-LRR* gene (bottom panel). The top panel shows the genomic structures between Col and Ler at the loci of AT3G23110, the receptor-like protein 37 with a non-synonymous mutation (Chr3:8224726, T→C) at sample of c74, and AT3G23120, the receptor like protein 38 with a deletion mutation (Chr3:8228194, Del:C, frameshift) at sample of c70. The bottom panel illustrates the genomic structures between two Col chromosomes at AT1G59780 and the mutations detected in a homozygous plant of Col⁸. Red arrows represent the position of mutation; the hatched areas indicate the identical sequences, the other regions being highly diversified; the dotted lines indicate the paired length of the homologs at the highly identical regions. During meiosis, possible pairings between parental chromosomes are illustrated, where the loops indicate the unpaired regions

Extended data 3. Correlation between mutations, recombination events, diversity and divergence. **a.** The relationship between nucleotide diversity (Col vs. Ler) and recombination rate. When the chromosomes were dissected into 100 kb non-overlapping windows, the diversity (polymorphism density) between Col and Ler and recombination rate in 67 F2s and 32 F4s were calculated for each window. When sorting the windows by the diversity and dividing them into 8 equal intervals (e.g., from 0 to 0.001, 0.001 to 0.002, 0.002 to 0.003....., and so on), the relationships between the average diversity and recombination rate is displayed. Error bars indicate s.e.m. **b.** The relationship between diversity and divergence. The black line represents standard linear regression line and is for illustrative purposes alone. The statistic is the result of Spearman's rank correlation. **c.** Relationship between mutation and distance to polymorphic sites. The mutation data were collected from our 67 F2s. Window 0 in x-axis is the 2×100 bp sequence surrounding the position of any given de novo mutation and 1-9 is 100-900 bp away from the mutation on both sides. For each window of 2×100 bp sequence, the average diversity is calculated. The black dots denote the average pairwise diversity among the published 80 Arabidopsis ecotypes; the red dots denote the average diversity between Col and the 80 ecotypes; the blue dots denote the average diversity between Ler and the 80 ecotypes. Error bars indicate s.e.m. **d.** Distribution of the mutations on the chromosomes. The gray vertical bars in the chromosomes denote the position of all collected mutations. When the chromosomes were dissected into 1Mb non-overlapping windows, the mutation numbers (blue shadow in the figure) were counted in each window. The red lines denote the average pairwise diversity among the published 80 Arabidopsis ecotypes